

FROM

STATE SENATOR

**SAM AANESTAD**

4<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

Northern California



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## SB 1285 UPDATE

### Governor Approves Expansion of Vital Health Service

Governor Schwarzenegger recently put his stamp of approval on health related legislation authored by Senator Sam Aanestad (R-Grass Valley), signing SB 1285 into law. The measure authorizes licensed speech pathologists to utilize a flexible endoscope to evaluate swallowing and voice function across all medical settings. The measure will become law in January, 2007.

#### The Problem

It's estimated that up to half of elderly, long-term care patients may experience swallowing and feeding disorders, which is called Dysphagia. Left untreated, this swallowing disorder can have serious consequences which includes dehydration, poor nutrition, choking, pneumonia and hospitalization.

#### The Solution

The flexible endoscope procedure is a safe and efficient procedure used by licensed speech pathologists across the country. However, not all patients have been able to receive this timely evaluation and therapy when they need it due to restrictions in California on where the procedure can take place. **SB 1285** expands the use of this procedure.

*"My legislation will allow licensed speech pathologists to perform flexible endoscope evaluations outside of an acute care setting, expanding the use of this procedure in long term care settings, rehabilitation facilities or even a physician's office."*

**Senator Sam Aanestad**

#### Demands for Services Will Increase

The California Speech-Language-Hearing Association reports California is entering a period of history where the state's elderly population is about to dramatically increase, which will place more pressure on the need for timely healthcare services. This new law will protect consumers and patients by expanding the use of an important procedure, while maintaining the oversight of a licensed physician.

#### Patient Safety Maintained

Several patient safeguards are contained within the Aanestad legislation. The procedure must still be requested by a Otolaryngologist (ear, nose & throat physician), and the speech pathologist performing the procedure must be supervised by a physician. The new law also requires that all abnormalities observed during the procedure must be reported to a physician, and that the procedure must take place in a setting that offers emergency medical backup procedures.

For more information, visit: <http://republican.sen.ca.gov/web/4>